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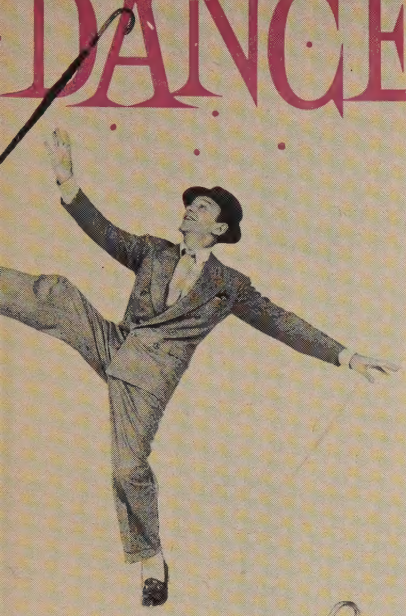

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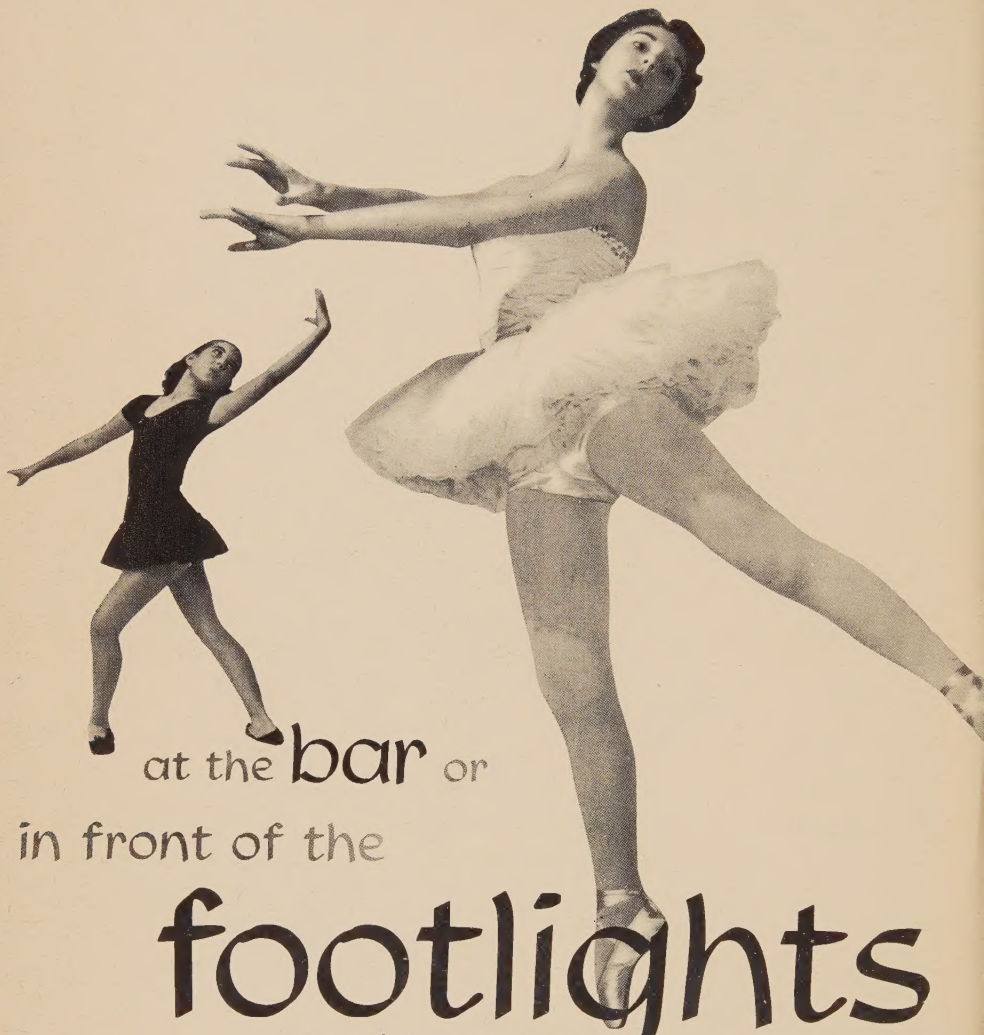

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153 Chicago National Association of Dance Masters
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127 Dance Masters of California

BOOKS

130 The Dance Mart

CONVENTIONS, ETC.

141 Associated Dance Teachers of Southern California
135 Cecchetti Council of America
140 William D'Albrew
139 Roads End Farm
130 Student International Travel Association

127 CLASSIFIED ADS

FOOTWEAR

144 Barney
152 Bill Buck
155 Capezio
122 Selva & Sons

MISCELLANEOUS

154 Jay Dance Notation
151 Strobelite
133 Tapco Taps

RECORDINGS, DANCE

143 Dance Records, Inc.
127 Kimbo Records
152 Russell Records
154 Statler Records
137 Stepping Tones

ROUTINES BY MAIL

153 Al Gilbert
155 Eva Varady

SUPPLY HOUSES, THEATRICAL

145 A & L Theatrical Fabric & Shoe
147 Art Teen Sports Wear Co.
149 Lew Serbin Dance Art Co.
133 Theatre Supply & Ballet Gift Shop

INDEX

125 COVER STORY

128 SIGNATURE of LOCALITY
J Marks

130 OUR READERS WRITE

131 THE DANCE in NEW YORK
R. Hasoutra

142 LONDON FOOTNOTES
Peter Craig-Raymond

145 TAMARA TOUMANOVA
(Part two of two parts)

149 BALLET NOTES
Olga Ziceva

151 TEACHERS' & STUDENTS' SECTION

156 DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

158 ADVANCED ACROBATICS and TUMBLING
James Rozanas

CARTOONS

139 Ed Le Cocq
140 Jack Lohr

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Cover Story . . .

FRED ASTAIRE

The gentleman on this month's cover is Fred Astaire, born May 10 in Omaha, Nebraska, son of Frederick E. Austerlitz and Ann Geilus, non-professionals. He and his sister Adele took the name of Astaire early in their professional careers and later made the change legal.

Fred was just five years of age and Adele 18 months his senior when they began taking dancing lessons. It wasn't long before they were making regular appearances on school and parish hall programs.

Fred was only seven when they became a brother-and-sister dance act. A year later, they reached New York and were hailed as child dancing sensations. Their mother, who accompanied them, sent the youngsters to Ned Wayburn's dancing school and here Fred proved himself to be as adept a pupil at tap dancing as he had been at the classical toe forms he first had learned.

With his professional activities, most of his schooling came from his mother, who diligently tutored her son and daughter.

As "Fred and Adele Astaire in New Songs and Smart Dances," the youthful team served a nine-year apprenticeship on the three-a-day vaudeville circuits. Fred was 17 when they made their bow in Broadway big-time. The year that America entered World War I they were signed for their first musical show, "Over the Top," starring Ed Wynn.

New and flattering assignments

Fred Astaire in a scene from Paramount's 'Let's Dance'.

—Bud Fraker

came in swift succession after that, first in the "Passing Show of 1918" at the Winter Garden and then in the operetta "Apple Blossoms," the show "For Goodness Sakes," written for them, and in "Lady Be Good," "Funny Face," "Smiles," "The Band Wagon," and other successes. Some of their shows took them to London and their fame became international. Parents about the country began naming their boy-and-girl twins after them.

The year 1932 brought the end of the famous dance team, when Adele married Lord Charles Arthur Francis Cavendish, son of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Adele, settled in the Cavendish family castle in North Ireland, hung up her dancing shoes and Fred, not without some trepidation over how the public would respond to one Astaire, after growing so accustomed to the two of them, continued alone.

Any doubts as to his success by himself quickly were dispelled by

the 32-week Broadway run of "The Gay Divorcee." After that, he was immediately signed to a film contract and brought to Hollywood by RKO to star in "Flying Down to Rio," with a newcomer named Ginger Rogers as his partner. Before this film could begin, however, Astaire, at his own request, went to Metro - Goldwyn - Mayer and joined Joan Crawford in a dance number for "Dancing Lady."

Until this and "Flying Down to Rio", established his success in films, he was dubious of his future place in Hollywood. On his first film test had been written, "Can't act. Can dance a little."

He was in London with an English company of "The Gay Divorcee" when cablegrams reached him to advise that he was a hit on the screen. Shortly after his return to Hollywood, the Astaire-Rogers combination was repeated in the picturization of "The Gay Divorcee," then again in "Roberta," "Top Hat," "Follow the Fleet," "Swing Time," "Shall We Dance?" and "The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle."

The list of Astaire's dancing partners during his film career has grown to include Dolores Del Rio, Eleanor Powell, Rita Hayworth, Paulette Goddard, Marjorie Reynolds, Joan Caulfield, Joan Leslie, Lucille Bremer and Olga San Juan, a list that now has Judy Garland, Ann Miller, Betty Hutton, Vera-Ellen and Jane Powell as its latest "names."

Since his film debut in "Dancing Lady" he has returned to M-G-M on frequent occasions — first for "Broadway Melody of 1940," then for "Ziegfeld Follies," later for "Yolanda and the Thief."

It was following this last that he starred with Bing Crosby in "Blue Skies," then announced his "retirement" from the screen. In 1948, however, he termed his absence as "just a mental retirement," and stepped nimbly back to star in Irving Berlin's "Easter Parade," along with Judy Garland, Ann Miller and Peter Lawford. As reports of its smashing success were confirming it as one of the year's biggest hits, he was rejoined by Ginger Rogers for "The Barkleys of Broadway," the tenth together for the popular team and the first since "The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle."

With these two pictures, he eagerly took up the challenge of creating, polishing and filming more of the striking dances for which he has become so famous. During his absence, he had relaxed in the East for a few months, then had become busy training instructors for his dance studios, which now extend across the country. Before long, however, he began to feel the yen to be back before the cameras, an urge that wasn't lessened by the thousands of letters from fans, who wrote him from all parts of the world lamenting his "retirement."

When he accepted the role in "Easter Parade," his return met with acclaim everywhere. Following "The Barkleys of Broadway," he immediately stepped into "Let's Dance" with Betty Hutton, and then back to M-G-M for "Three Little Words" and "Royal Wedding," in which he takes Jane Powell as his newest dancing partner, with Peter Lawford and Sarah Churchill also in leading roles.

Astaire's peerless dancing has included a tour to entertain troops before V-E Day in France, Belgium and Holland. In France, he and Bing Crosby, his co-star in two pictures, trouped together for GIs.

The star's family consists of his wife, the former Phyllis Potter, socially prominent non-professional to whom he was married July 12, 1933; their daughter, Ava, aged six; their son, Fred, Jr., aged 12;

and the dancing star's stepson, Peter, 19.

An important interest is his dance studio enterprise, and still another is his racing stable, which formerly included the Hollywood Gold Cup winner Triplicate, now retired to stud after winning four times what Astaire originally paid for him. In addition, the dancing actor enjoys being a good amateur piano player and a golfer who is held as better than average.

* * *

Statistics

Born, Frederick Austerlitz, Omaha, Neb., May 10. Parents, Ann Geilus and Frederick E. Austerlitz, non-professionals. Married to Phyllis Potter, July 12, 1933; daughter Ava, six; son Fred, Jr., 12; stepson Peter, 19. Height, 5 feet 9 inches. Weight, 140 pounds. Hair, brown. Eyes, brown.

STAGE: Nine years in vaudeville teamed with sister Adele. On Broadway, "Over the Top," "Passing Show of 1918," "Apple Blossoms," "For Goodness Sakes," "Lady Be Good," "Funny Face," "Smiles," "The Band Wagon," "The Gay Divorcee," and others from 1917 to 1933.

SCREEN: "Dancing Lady," "Flying Down to Rio," 1933; "The Gay Divorcee," 1934; "Roberta," "Top Hat," 1935; "Follow the Fleet," "Swing Time," 1936; "Shall We Dance?", "A Damsel in Distress," 1937; "Carefree," 1938; "The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle," "Broadway Melody of 1940," 1939; "Second Chorus," 1940; "You'll Never Get Rich," 1941; "Holiday Inn," "You Were Never Lovelier," 1942; "The Sky's the Limit," 1943; "Ziegfeld Follows," 1944; "Yolanda and the Thief," 1945; "Blue Skies," 1946; "Easter Parade," "The Barkleys of Broadway," 1948; "Let's Dance," 1949; "Three Little Words," "Royal Wedding," 1950.

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Editor's Note: Fred Astaire's latest musical is "Funny Face" by Paramount and stars Audrey Hepburn. His next will be "Silk Stockings" with Cyd Charisse.

The SIGNATURE of LOCALITY / j marks

► SAN FRANCISCO . . . The Ballets Basques de Biarritz put in a single performance at the Geary Theatre which added one more in the curent string of folklore dance performances touring the world. Unfortunately, it seems to me, each additional showing by each additional group proves a little less satisfactory than the previous one.

The company's major problem seems to be its flirtation with "serious" dance forms. Its formal balletic efforts are extremely weak, while its efforts in behalf of interpretative dance (which amounted to so much mime) proved miserably embarrassing and naive.

The element of interest made itself apparent in the folk dances the group performed. The dances: "Maparroako Dantza Xorta," the "Agurra" and the "Ikurrinari" all proved to be exciting and entertaining. And where the technique of the dancers seemed to fail, the spirit of the singers and musicians excelled.

Certainly not a great insight into the dance or into the dance of a people, but an abundantly entertaining afternoon.

► THE BALLET RUSSE DE MONTE CARLO . . . once again the Ballet Russe put in several performances in San Francisco and gave us an opportunity to see works from its very standard repertory as well as two novelties.

One thing seemed very clear on the opening night: since last we saw this company and remarked upon the lack of policy behind its efforts a decided sharpening of intent has come about. An event which was really very pleasing to observe. In all, the repertory did not appear quite so borrowed; the dancers had penetrated into their roles and steps in a manner which, to some degree, lent the feeling that performance in the ballet is more than mere tradition.

Although this writer is somewhat content with having seen ten performances of "Giselle" some eight years ago, Miss Alonso still manages to excite enthusiasm in the second act of this oldest work in the contemporary repertory. And the soloists and corps put in performances which were a vast improvement over the same efforts last year.

It seems to me that most of us who know the Ballet Russe were particularly interested to see what it offered in the way of novelties. And, as in the past, I fear, the great part of their efforts in that direction proved extremely provisional and of purely temporary interest. The exception to this dilemma is "Harlequinade" — an experiment of sorts which derives its interest both from the mannerisms of the commedia del' arte and modern efforts in symbolic communication. The amalgamation of these elements was most convincing and successful, and though the steps and combinations employed to realize the substance of the ballet were well within the tradition, their element of tone and texture gave new life to a company of ballet dancers who, for too many years now, have glided along on the assumption that the public requires nothing more than seeing the same steps being executed in what is believed to be the old manner.

Unfortunately the season of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo did

not add up to the success which it might have were all of its efforts characterized by a singular stress and insight into the dance. As always this particular failure is distressing to us because we recognize the outstanding potential of the various constituents of this troupe. We can only hope that the margin of integration and the formation of the artistic policy continues to demonstrate positive results in future seasons.

► THE BALLET CELESTE . . . still one of the most amazing dance organizations this writer has ever seen. The San Francisco Ballet Celeste is composed of dancers all under the age of seventeen. As such they represent the farthest thing from the usually obnoxious cavortings of child-stars. Their performing qualities remain on equal terms with any adult and professional company; and what they may lack in technical experience and strength they compensate for most fully in a magnificent and persistent stage presence and command of the feeling and esthetic of their dances.

One cannot say how refreshing and gladdening it is to see dancers who, in dancing, reflect a very serious and great love of the art. Dancers, in fact, who seem to know what dance is all about — who do not merely imitate the techniques of steps and attitudes but bodily respond to their own movement as well as to the movement around them.

Marriem Lanova who is responsible for the training of these young people, should be universally recognized as one of the finest balletic instructors and perpetuators of the idea of the balletic theatre.

► This month Jose Limon and Company will give performances in San Francisco under the auspices of the Spencer Barefoot Celebrities Concerts. Mr. Limon will thus be making his first performance in this city after three years of absence. The program notes promise several west coast premiere performances of works which have been composed during the past two seasons in New York.

Alicia Alonso & Igor Youskevitch

► The Poet's Follies, a hybrid San Francisco showcase company, have entered the field of dance with a composition based on the "Revelations" in a condensation by Albert Haas, featuring Zack Thompson and troupe with dances by Dick Whalen. I hear that the goings-on are extremely provocative and entertaining.

► The Contemporary Dancers Company, under contract with San Jose State College, will be presented in two performances and a master class as part of that institution's Centennial Celebration. Represented will be professors and

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Our Readers Write

Gentlemen:

You printed a brief review of my dance book, "How to Cha Cha," in the August/September 1956 issue of your publication, Dancing Star.

I thought that you — and most certainly your Advertising and Publicity Departments — would be interested to know that now, in March, 1957, I am still receiving requests for my books mentioning that they had seen the review in your magazine.

Sincerely yours,
Martin Sterney

Thanks, Mr. Sterney.

---

students of numerous western universities and colleges.

► The San Francisco Ballet made international news with its dilemma: stranded in the Orient due to a miscalculation on the part of its Department of State sponsors. The problems being solved, the group will continue through the Orient and close its first international tour with several appearances in Europe. Reports on the company indicate enthusiastic reception everywhere.

Dear Editor:

Jerry Root's article about Romola Nijinsky and her family in your February issue was of considerable interest to me. I had hoped to learn more of the Nijinsky family in that article than I have been able to learn in Romola Nijinsky's biography of her husband, and also from other sources that I have read in the past concerning the same points. It is my hope that I may, at long last, learn through your publication what I very much wish to know.

No doubt the average reader of Nijinsky's biography would be content with what they had read of that great ballet artist's life. My own case is a bit different. I have found that it whetted my curiosity about Nijinsky's daughter, Kyra, her son, and also Nijinsky's sister, Bronislava. During this past year I have learned that Madame Nijinsky and her daughter have made their home in San Francisco. Unfortunately I do not have their address so I am unable to write directly to them. Jerry Root's article has cleared up for me where Bronislava Nijinsky is living and about what she is doing at present. So that leaves but one point which is yet to be cleared up to my satisfaction and curiosity, and that is Kyra Markevitch's son. Is he still living? If so, did he follow in his grandfather's and mother's footsteps by taking up ballet? If not, did he follow in his father's footsteps and take up music, or what?

Jerry Root's article fortunately gave a photograph of Madame Nijinsky as she appears at present. I would like to have for my collection photographs of all of the living members of the Nijinsky family and particularly a photograph of Kyra Nijinsky's son. Could you let me know just how I might go about getting them? If you will send me the desired information in this letter I shall be greatly indebted to you.

Yours very truly,
James H. Dungan, Jr.

the DANCE in NEW YORK

R. HASOUTRA

AMERICAN BALLET THEATER
METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE

The month of February has been crackling with dance events, the most gala of them all was the only appearance here, this season, of the American Ballet Theater.

The old gold and red plush "Met" fairly dripped foreign flags and finery, for the representatives of all the countries visited by Ballet Theater on its recent tour of Europe and the Middle East, turned out in full regalia. The star event was the first New York showing of "Winter's Eve," a new work, choreographed for Ballet Theater and first produced in Lisbon by Kenneth MacMillan, choreographer for the Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells).

In spite of all the good will in the world -- and it was there -- no one could be entirely enthusiastic about it. The performers were in good form but "Winter's Eve" was not. It is a sad tale. A blind girl mets a boy on his way to a dance, they fall in love, he invites her to the ball, she tries to hide her blindness but it is soon discovered; dismayed, she runs away, the boy follows her and, in an argument, she accidentally blinds him. They become separated, grope in vain to find each other and, in the end, are left alone.

The story might have been a moving tragedy and Mr. MacMillan had everything to help him — with Nora Kaye and John Kriza, two of our greatest dancers, Benjamin Britten's magnificent music, an excellent company and lavish funds for production (the Doris Duke Foundation allotted $19,000 for it). Perhaps the shock of its failure struck deeper because of the great potentials of both the company and the choreographer, for MacMillan is a sensitive, inventive artist and some passages were exquisite. It could be that his concept of a blind girl's emotions is colored by his own pity. Most blind people develop a dignity and acceptance — but this girl expressed only anguish at her own plight and Miss Kaye's broad interpretation stressed this anguish until it became self-pity, rampant.

Another point which was hard to accept was the visitation of doves descending on the girl — three black-shrouded figures against a black drop, wore white birds attached to their wrists

so, when they carried her about in adagio movements, she appeared to be borne by the doves. (Who was that gal at the World's Fair whose twelve doves undressed her?) These fine feathered friends probably had a poetic reason but the difficulty of mixing realistic pantomime and poetic symbols was never more apparent. The corps de ballet had nothing of importance to do and they were decidedly over-dressed for it. When the boy brought his blind girl to the ball, she, in a simple sheath, looked as though she were in her underwear!

It was sad because it was pretentious. It is for young choreographers to take heart — even the best miss when they have felt too sure, too soon.

The rest of the program was first rate, especially Lupe Serrano and Oleg Tupine in a brilliant "Pas de Deux from Don Quixote" and, of course, David Lichine's delightful "Graduation Ball" where Ruth Ann Koesun was particularly lovely.

JOSE GRECO AND HIS SPANISH BALLET
BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC

The colorful excitement of Jose Greco's annual visit seems to increase with the years. The company was in top form, intensely alive, very capable and sparkling with individual talents, some better than others but all full of exuberance. This sense of freedom is probably due to Mr. Greco's own choreographic approach, for he has branched away from the traditionally controlled forms of classic Spanish dancing and gives more emphasis to personal expression, pantomimic tales, dramatic and humorous. The result is excellent entertainment.

Soleares y Seguiriya "Encuentro" had moments of greatness. Manuela de Jerez, with whiplike lash of movement, smouldering tensions, wild fury and rebellion, playing against Jose Greco's commanding heels and powerful poise, suggested a wild and beautiful tigress.

"Lamento Cantiga," sung by Norina and danced by Greco and five of his group, just missed the vital emotional quality intended. Mr. Greco is an excellent dancer, slim and handsome, and the characteristic use of his amazingly perfect waist and hips is fine and effective when kept in relation to the dance as a whole but when he starts to exaggerate these physical attractions, his dancing becomes a series of poses.

"Madrid 1890" was a humorous street episode with flirtations, frolics and fights. Mr. Greco's sweeping mustache and his use of it added much to the fun.

Of course, "El Cortijo," Greco's famous zapateado with Jose Molina, Dominguez Montez and Roberto Lorca, was still the "hit." Nevertheless, the finale, "Rincon Flamenco," brought out some of the finest dancing of the evening.

Jose Greco's excellence as choreographer and director, and

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the unity and spontaneity he has inspired in his company, produced a splendid performance.

PEARL LANG AND DANCE CO.
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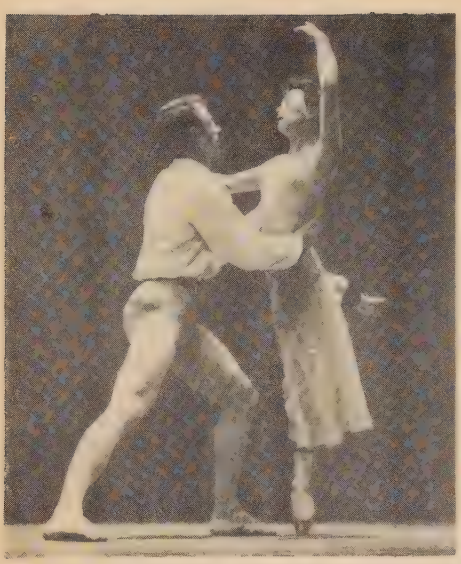
The premiere of Miss Lang's latest choreographic work, "Falls the Shadow Between," was an exciting performance. Based on the ancient myth of Persephone, it also carried an allegorical theme relating to the creative experience. In a prologue and four scenes: "On Earth," "Underworld," "Section of the Upper World" and "Return and Descent to the Source," with clarity and beauty, the story unfolds: Persephone's abduction by Pluto, Demeter's grief for her daughter and the blight which she puts upon the earth, Persephone's return from the underworld for six months each year, bringing Spring and Summer, and when Pluto reclaims her, comes the barren Fall and Winter.

Jose Greco & Company — W.H. Stephan



Buzz Miller & Gemze de Lappe in 'Asmus' 'Isabella'.

Jillana & Ivan Allen in Asmus' 'Ballinade'. —Photos by Stephan

Although the first pa tris somewhat lengthy and complicated, the choreography is rich and strong and Meyer Kupferman's music is magnificent. As Persephone, Miss Lang gave a brilliant performance, vital and compelling. Karen Kanner portrayed Demeter with sensitive depth, David Lober was a powerful Pluto and Bruce Marks a handsome, humorous Hermes. The group, as demolished souls, danced with dedicated fervor. "Falls the Shadow Between," although it still needs considerable cuttting, is an important and beautiful work.

The two other numbers on the program are old favorites, "Legend," based on S. Ansky's play "The Dybbuk," to music by Morton Feldman, and "Joy Is My Witness," that perenially lovely masterpiece of Miss Lang's to Bach's music. She presented this on TV Omnibus, March 3.

Pearl Lang is one of our finest dancers and a choreographer of highest quality.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET COMPANY
CITY CENTER THEATER

New York City is properly proud of the magnificent showing "our" ballet company has made this season. Whatever the success of the three new ballets and two revivals presented, all agree that the company has held a consistently high level of performance and morale, even without their leader, George Balanchine, who is still in Copenhagen.

The first of the new ballets was "The Unicorn," The Gorgon and The Manticore," choreographed by John Butler to Gian Carlo Menotti's Twelve Madrigals. (Reviewed in last month's issue.)

"The Masquers," to music by Poulenc, was choreographed by Tod Bolender and danced by Melissa Hayden and Jacques d'Amboise. Naturally, there was comparison with Mr. Bolender's success of last year, "Still Point," also danced by Miss Haylen and Mr. d'Amboise. The new work is wider in scope, richer in choreographic possibilities, but lacks the clear, unified completeness of the earlier work. "The Masquers" is a sordid, bitter tale of a girl's devotion to a self-centered brute who kicks and beats her or rudely possesses her, according to his mood. One time, he hit too hard and killed her. Melissa Hayden held the piece together by the strength and sensitive depth she brought to the role. After she died, nothing else convincing happened. Miss Hayden, for my money, is our greatest dramatic dancer, an artist of quality.

Jacques d'Amboise was properly swaggering and cruel, but after the girl's death, he did not have the inner force to make his grief and regeneration convincing. Perhaps his instinct was more

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psychologically correct than Mr. Bolender's. I rather suspect that even such great tragedy would not have changed that callous boy. Jonathan Watts was very good as girl's comforter and Yvonne Mounsey, cleverly amusing as the slovenly prostitue.

The group work was an interesting blend of modern and ballet techniques, excellently done. However, they seemed to have no relation to the story or the fairly literal pantomimic movements used by the cast in telling the story. The result was a strange mixture of clarity and confusion.

"PASTORALE" is Francisco Moncion's first choreographic venture and Charles Turner's first musical score for a ballet. The result is a poignant, beautiful work.

A group of young lovers in the woods stops at a cluster of trees while playing blind-man's-buff, unaware of a solitary blind boy who is resting in the shadows. The young people run away from the girl who is blind-folded and she, groping to find them, discovers the blind boy and becomes strongly attracted to him, unaware of his affliction. His tender passion awakens her womanhood. When she does realize that he cannot see and the pain this can bring to them, she is too young and unsure to be able to accept him and yet she has already grown beyond her childhood lover and carefree friends. She walks away, as in a dream, and the blind boy is again in solitude.

Mr. Moncion told the story concisely, with taste and sensitivity. The choreography was not very strong but this was hardly noticed in the spell of true dramatic beauty created. Allegra Kent portrayed the girl with exquisite nuances as she passed from carefree childhood into a gentle maturity. This was her first dramatic role and she did it beautifully. As the blind boy, Francisco Moncion had deep emotional control, no trace of sentimentality and a remarkable understanding of innate sense of space — possessed by the blind. What a contrast to the anguish and stumbling in "Winter's Eve"!

The two revivals were: "Filling Station," choreographed by Lew Christensen, to music by Virgil Thomson, and Frederick Ashton's "Picnic at Tintagel," to music by Sir Arnold Bax.

The New York City Ballet closed March 3 and, after a rest, will open their Chicago season April 22.

LOUIS JOHNSON AND DANCE COMPANY
Y.M.H.A. CONCERT HALL

Mr. Johnson did the choreography, designed the sets and costumes, and performed superbly in one of the most entertaining presentations of the YMHA season. Although all the numbers were pleasing and well done, there were three high spots: "Harlequine," "Lament" and "Trio."

"Harlequine," to music by Kabalevsky, was a gem of a solo where Louis Johnson's splendid balletic power and control, con-

trasted with the light whimsey of costume and mood—like a giant playing, amusedly, with a trifle.

"Lament" was as haunting and moving as Villa Lobo's music. The flowing patterns of the group became a fog of hopeless sorrow, engulfing and quenching the elfin figure of youthful and valiant hope — beautifully danced by Maggie Newman.

"Trio," to popular jazz tunes, was in three parts: **Trouble,** a slinky episode of blues with the group, in which Lavinia Hamilton paced like a sleek young puma; **Dukish,** a hilarious duet, danced by Louis Johnson and Jackie Walcott, was breathtaking with its unbelievable speed and precision; **Samba,** a particularly well done group number in Bahiana style. In all, a powerful and delightful "Trio".

Mr. Johnson is a very capable choreographer, has a good sense of theatrical values, and is himself a brilliant dancer. No wonder there was so much clamor after the first concert that a repeat performance is to be given within a month!

THE ASMUS BALLET REPERTORY
Y.M.H.A. CONCERT HALL

The program Harry Asmus presented was full of surprises and of first rate dancing talent, particularly Gemse de Lappe, Jillana and Buzz Miller.

The first surprise was that "Spring Prom," a weak effort, poorly conceived and poorly done, should have been given at all, let alone open the performance.

"Ballinade," to music by Grieg, was another surprise by its excellence. In fine, elegant, classic form, the four movements: Al-

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legretto, Andante, Allegro con brio and Allegro vivace — built to a brilliant finish. Jillana, recently with the New York City Ballet, danced with style and beauty and Ivan Allen partnered her excellently. The Pas de Deux in the Andante was particularly lovely. Although the corps de ballet showed more enthusiasm than precision, "Ballinade" was Mr. Asmus' most successful piece of choreography.

"Isabella," to music by Casella, was a swashbuckling melodrama, dreamed up by Joseph C. Wilson and played — one cannot say danced — in a rough and tumble Commedia dell' Arte style. Set in Italian Renaissance era, this thriller outdid Hollywood — the beautiful maiden marries her betrothed (priest, candles and everything), the dastardly villain provokes duel, kills the young husband and tries to steal Isabella. The dead husband's brother saves her and it all happens over again, only this time Isabelal is killed by accident by her husband. He, too, is mortally wounded —so a friendly neighbor polishes off the dastardly villain. Throughout all this, the chorus, called Zanis, dressed in weird rags, constantly interrupted matters to scamper about and gloat. Of course, it was hilarious, but would have been funnier if the broad comedy had been sustained instead, they tried to make the love scenes "tender and true," which didn't come off, and of course broke the spell of comedy.

It was a shame to waste the dancing talent represented by Gemse de Lappe, Buzz Miller, Ron Stratton and Ray Pointer but the boys seemed to enjoy the duels — there were plenty of them — and they flashed their rapiers as well as Errol Flynn does. Fritz Hess made a very dastardly villain.

"And Four," to music by Don Gillis, was a modern jazz suite in four parts, danced by Gemse de Lappe, Buzz Miller, Ray Pointer and Ron Stratton. Their performance was excellent but what they had to do was not always very interesting. Some of the eccentric movements had humor but most just reached for the laugh which didn't come. Gemse de Lappe and Buzz Miller danced a very lovely pas de deux with strange, sometimes breathtaking lifts.

BALLET '57
CARNEGIE RECITAL HALL

The program consisted of seven numbers by five choreographers but only one presented a finished, complete work — Anatole Vilzak. His "Valse Sentimentale," to a simple waltz by Tchaikowsky, was utterly satisfying in its easy flow, blending mood, movement and music. It was admirably danced by Judith Friedman and Ron Murray and the costumes tastefully enhanced the mood.

In "Balletto Da Camera," Benjamin Harkarvy periodically caught the style and phrasing of Vivaldi's music and the feeling of that era, but did not sustain it. Elizabeth Wullen and Richard Olson, while accomplished dancers, did not seem right for this piece and were not helped by the costumes which accentuated the boy's thinness and made the girl look stiff and heavy.

'Oh Jerry, this is simply awful! Can't you possibly make the dance Saturday night?'

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"Harpsichord Variations," to Bach's music, was choreographed by Susan Kaufman, the talented child of fifteen who made a hit last year in the New York City Ballet's "Nutcracker Suite." Of course, her work was strongly influenced by George Balenchine but one could wish that it were as strongly influenced by J. S. Bach's perfect phrasing and tempi. However, it was a considerable accomplishment in a good direction. Her group of very young pupils worked devotedly and showed poise and skill.

"Three Gymnopedies," to Erik Satie's music, choreographed by Joseph Rosen and danced by Jeanne Thomas and Robert Vickrey, suggested beads strung on a slack cord. Movements got knotted into chunks, leaving bare spaces. Mr. Rosen's other work, "Forewarned," to music by Saint Saens, was better. The bride in love with a masked stranger who turns out to be death is not new, but occasionally there were colorful dramatic pictures and interesting passages. Jeanne Thomas danced the doomed girl very well, indeed.

"The Thornapple," to music by Cimarosa, choreographed by James Clouser, was an awkward handling of the old story of a faun-like character tempting a girl from her own true love. The bright spot was Melinda Plank's clarity and quality of freshness. Mr. Clouser's other work, "The Automatons," was a confused tale of a young couple's visit to a shop-of-sorts where figures became animated and danced painfully, one after the other. Suddenly a new couple knocks at the door and the whole thing starts over again. Whether the first couple was turned into dolls — and why — or if they just got bored and slipped out the back way — who knows?

For the most part, the young choreographers tackle subjects too complicated for their inexperienced abilities and then, because they are tired working on it or can't think of anything new, they imagine it is finished and rush to show it.

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Among the program of thirteen items, there were only a few which were outstanding. "Three Fictitious Games," choreographed by Jeff Duncan to music by F. Poulenc, are fun games, dance games and are charming as such; however, they can be seen from another point of view. As gentle jibes at modern dance absurdities, they are neat, telling and in utter good taste. Perhaps because they are done as children playing, there is not the sting of satire, but at the same time they relegate much of the solemn nonsense we take for dance back to the realm where it belongs — child's play! You can take your choice. That is why Jeff Duncan's work is a little gem. His group performed with delightful elan.

Mr. Duncan's solo, "Epigraphies Antques" to music by Debussy — "in the sun, in the night, in the rain," showed the basic reactions of the body to each change of nature and Duncan's handsome and well trained body danced them for him. He is capable of expert complicated technique. We've all seen it when he dances in Anna Sokolov's group. It is significant that for his own solo he chose to do the very simple — very well.

"The Tenderling," to Villa-Lobo's music, which was choreographed and first presented last year by Marion Scott, deals sensitively and beautifully with the timid wavering of a young girl accepting womanhood and the comforting encouragement of the mature women around her. Marnie Thomas was a lovely tenderling! Miss Scott's other work, "Hymn," was not very interesting.

"Three Rhapsodies," "Questioning, Weeping, Rejoicing," to music by Henry Cowell, was choreographed and danced by Melissa Nicolaides. In "Questioning," every move was a sensitive feeling-forth, searching, trying, vibrating. In "Weeping," the sculpture-like lines of formal grief were full of deep emotion with no sentimentality. In "Rejoicing" her joy was utterly infectious! These three were pure imagination and pure dance, exquisitely done. "Arrivals," Miss Nicolaides' second number, had no such spark. But who doesn't enjoy seeing beautiful movement for its 'sake alone?

"Somewhere to Nowhere," to music by Paul Bowles, choreographed and danced by Jack Moore, was priceless. With his silly faked tap dances, his quivering wish to please and his resiliency after a flop, he evoked all the ham and tragedy of vaudeville!

"Figures Caught" (Running, Working, Seeking) to music by Nordli-Kueter, Bruce King started with promise but, in spite of the feat of wrapping yards of black tape around four sticks, our interest was only that he wouldn't choke himself. In his "Parades" again he started off brightly, but got lost in a fog. Mr. King is a very capable dancer with good technical skill but in his choreography he looks to outer things rather than himself.

In "Song," "Two Sorrows" and "And the Desert Shall Rejoice," Frances Alenikoff showed more sentimentality than dancing ability.

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LONDON FOOTNOTES

by

PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

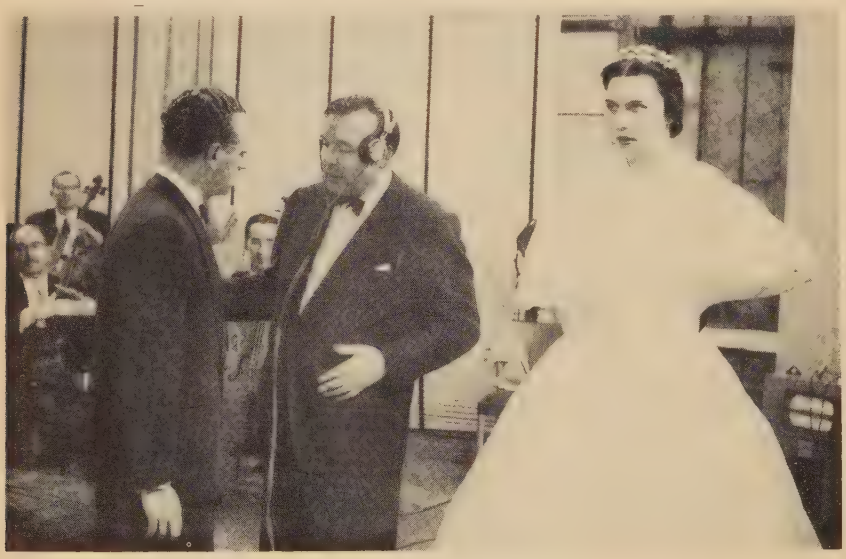
● Paris and London, prime stamping ground for the Uday Shankars and Ram Gopals of the Indian world, this month sees yet a new Indian dance group. The Little Dance Company of Bombay.

● Appearing first in Paris, this new group comes with a readymade reputation from Bombay which describes it as "India's best, most authentic.' I, personally, have no belief in authenticity as a theatrical motive. But, certainly, neither have I any dislike of authenticity as one component facet of a theatrically effective display.

● This the Little Bombay group achieves: they are professionally sound, imbue excitement into their production and performances and the fact of authentic detail is surely an added attraction. There are plans, I believe, for a New York appearance this fall.

● At Covent Garden, during the pre-Moscow-that-never-was preparations, Frederic Ashton wisely decided to remount the pop skating ballet, Les Patineurs. Now, altogether larger to make use of the Bolshoi's stage, Patineurs is agreeably more impressive at the Garden. Not only has Ashton added physical size, he has increased the choreographic area and introduced more spacious, therefore more developable, stage patterns which make Les Patineurs worth seeing again.

● Daphnis and Chloe is also revived, with Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes improving on their



Candid camera shot of Beryl Grey during TV show this month. With her are conductor Eric Robinson and Larry Adler. —Photo: Jack Blake-Colorama

Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes in 'Birthday Offering' the final ballet presented during the gala performance at Covent Garden on March 26 by the Royal Ballet. —Jack Blake-Colorama

original performances which had become tired — a not altogether amazing result of the ballet itself. And, lastly, Svetlana Beriosova has assumed Beryl Grey's abdicated role of the Black Queen in de Valois' Checkmate. And assumed it — I would say — magnificently.

● Anton Dolin loses Kenneth Melville from his Festival Ballet this month. Melville, invited to become premier danseur of the Borovansky Ballet, flies to Australia — in time, coincidentally, to dance with Margot Fonteyn who is flying out from the Royal Ballet to appear as guest ballerina in the Borovansky revival of Le Lac des Cygnes. 6,000 miles to dance with another London dancer!

● Completing their spring provincial tour, the junior Royal Ballet

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Belinda Wright and John Gilpin in Case Noissette. Taken just before Festival Ballet left on their European tour.

(from Sadler's Wells theatre) pay a four-week visit to the Opera House in Barcelona. Also just thru an English schedule, Dolin's Festival Ballet play single weeks in Oslo, Copenhagen, then to Denmark and Germany. Royal Ballet dancers, Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassine, are away from hq right now, appearing in their 'Ballet Highlights' programme for out-of-town audiences.

● Royal Ballet resignee Beryl Grey is off to South America next month for an independent tour. After her return she will appear with various continental companies in addition to various guest appearances at Covent Garden.

Toto Gobbi becomes the intriguement for the Royal Ballet's Svetlana Beriosova who, with Philip Chatfield, shared a British television programme.

—Photos by Jack Blake-Colorama

an informal interview with

TAMARA TOUMANOVA

This is the 12th in a series of informal interviews with prominent personalities from the "World of Dance" Miss Toumanova was interviewed at the San Francisco Opera House on December 8, 1954, where she was appearing with "Festival Ballet."

A DANCING STAR EXCLUSIVE

(The Second of Two Parts)

Q. In your opinion, Miss Toumanova, what do you think could be done, either by government or private enterprise, to further the arts in general, and dance in particular, in this country?

A. I think that every state should get together and organize their own companies. I think people have enough money to be able to donate one or two dollars to a cause so important. Important not only for its aesthetic qualities, but spiritual qualities as well. I think I would be one of the first to thank God if this happens. In France the government subsidizes the Paris Opera and the La Scala de Milan in Italy, and in Argentina there are subsidies. In our country we have the best of everything, the greatest of artists. Not only is this greatness in those who have already made their careers, but in those whose fu-

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ture lies ahead. This country must help the artist and especially the ballet art.

Q. In other words, we've got to think of something other than the dollar insofar as art is concerned, is that what you mean?

A. Well, let's face it. Life isn't easy today and if you haven't got a dollar, today, as in the past, you're not going to eat. I'm not one of those persons who has always had money. There was a time when I didn't have a dollar — and I didn't eat. Although life is difficult today, I do think there is a tremendous power in the ballet. It is of great importance that every family develop a deep feeling for the ballet art in this country if they would see it thrive.

Q. Miss Toumanova, I'd like to ask you a question specifically for the parents who read Dancing Star magazine. What age do you feel is best to start a child in ballet?

A. Well, I think the earlier the better. Say between six and ten years of age. But this doesn't mean that this is the end. A child can start at twelve, at sixteen or at twenty, and I've known cases where people started at twenty-five and did very well. I think it depends a lot on the ambition of the person. Naturally, when we are children, our bone construction is much softer, and it's much easier to develop our bodies. But it's also much easier to spoil a child if she has a bad teacher. If you are already set in your bone construction it is important to have a great master. And if you are a child it's even more important. I would say that a parent could start a child from six to fifteen — that is, for a career.

Q. How would you suggest that a parent go about finding a good school, or teacher, for a child?

A. A parent can always find one. There are so many great names in the ballet world. There are many ballet books to refer to. Then there is always somebody from a ballet company who is willing to give ballet lessons. And if you are in a really large city such as Chicago, New York or San Francsico, you will find great masters there.

Q. As you undoubtedly know, Miss Toumanova, this country has become increasingly alarmed over juvenile delinquency. With this thought in mind I should like to ask: Do you think that youngsters who are occupied with some phase of cultural training, such as drama, music, dancing and so forth, are less likely to become juvenile delinquents than children whose time is less occupied?

A. Definitely. I think that if parents gave their children training in any of the arts there would be a lot less trouble with the children. The trouble is, many children have so much free

time in which to run around the streets, often doing the wrong things. If they have something constructive to occupy their minds they will eventually fall in love with what they are doing. It will become a part of their life, a part which they will be unable to live without.

Q. Miss Toumanova, what is the most unusual experience you have encountered in your professional life?

A. Well, that's hard to say, but I think perhaps the most unusual experience for me happened just a few months ago during the shooting of the picture, "Deep In My Heart," where I suddenly had to sing — and which I never expected I'd have to do in my life.

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Q. You actually sing?

A. I actually sing, and I do a vaudeville number which I never thought I would be able to do — or even be asked to do.

Q. How did they happen to ask you to do this?

A. Strangely enough, I was in Brazil when I received a wire from MGM asking if I wanted to do the picture. It was such a wonderful picture, as well as a challenge to me, that I accepted immediately.

Q. As a final question, what are your future professional plans?

A. Well, I have so many that at present I'm just in the middle of discussing them. Briefly, I have offers from ballet companies, offers to do ballet concerts and two more motion pictures— one in Hollywood and one in Europe. I also have a musical comedy and a television series under consideration. I have until January to make up my mind. I will be with this present company until March the first. But as to which medium I will choose, I just can't say at this time.

BALLET NOTES

By OLGA ZICEVA

Following is a facsimile of one of the columns written by Olga Ziceva which appears twice a month in the San Mateo Times (Calif.). Mme. Ziceva is, herself, a talented dancer and teacher and for the past years has conducted her own ballet school in San Mateo.

It is with much sadness that I write of the deaths of the last of the great ballet masters of the past generation — Theodore Kosloff and Boris Romanoff.

It will always be a source of pride and gratification to me to have known and studied with these men who have contributed so enormously to the dance. Mr. Kosloff was born in Moscow, Russia, and first studied ballet at the Moscow Imperial Ballet school, and upon his graduation he was sent to the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, where he soon became one of their most colorful solists, and later premier danseur.

Kosloff came to the United States in 1911 and soon after formed a ballet company called Les Saison de Ballets Russes, of which the writer was a member, and toured the United States and Canada for several seasons. In 1917 he was engaged by Cecil B. DeMille for leading roles in pictures and since then he lived in Hollywood most of the time, where he recently died at the age of 75.

Mr. Romanoff was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, and graduated from the Imperial Ballet school. While an artist with the Maryinsky theatre, he also danced with the famous Diaghileff Ballet. His talent for choreography was so great that his fame is more as a choreographer and teacher than as a dancer.

In all he staged no less than 32 original ballets — the latest — "Harlequinade," which was recently performed in San Francisco by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. He left Russia in 1921 and soon after was appointed choreographer for the La Scala Opera, Milan; subsequently for the Colon theatre,

Buenos Aires; Teatro Reale, Tom Teatro Reggia, Turin; and the Metropolitan Opera of New York for the seasons 1938 thru 1949. He lived for many years in New York where in January 30 he passed away at the age of 64.

Tanaquil LeClercq—now for happier news. The many admirers, friends. and well-wishers of this talented ballerina will be gladdened by the latest reports from Copenhagen, where she was stricken with polio while on tour with the New York City Ballet, that tell of her improved condition. She may be flown back to New York soon. It is hoped that her career has suffered only a temporary interruption; but until she returns to the stage — ballet will be without her irreplaceable personality and talent.

Names are changed — The Sadler's Wells Ballet is no more — it has been re-incorporated under Royal Charter and will henceforth be known as The British Royal Ballet. The millions who saw and enjoyed this company when S. Hurok presented them in a TV performance of The Sleeping Beauty in December, 1955, can again look forward to seeing another TV performance.

They are to fly to New York to appear in Mr. Hurok's "Producer's Showcase" (TV-NBC, color black and white — depending upon your set) on April 29, and will dance Frederick Ashton's three act ballet "Cinderella." They will return again to the U. S. for their 5th American tour and will open September 8 at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, for a four week run — to be followed by a 17 weeks nation-wide tour, which will include San Francisco for nine performances — November 20 through 27.

Another interesting change of name — what we have heretofore known as The Ballet theatre is now called The American Ballet theatre on account of their world-wide tour under the state department's international exchange program. Miss Lucia Chase, director of the company has re-established the policy of an annual transcontinental tour with the company's availability in America for at least six months of the year — this will be good news for the many admirers of this artistic company which is too seldom seen on the Pacific Coast.

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Teachers' and Students' section

DANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

★ ★ From the Raoul Pause Studio Workshop in Oakland, Calif. comes word that the Players Guild opened its first season with a workshop program of 3 Original Ballets choreographed by Raoul Pause. Performances were held April 5, 6, and 7. On May 24th the Players Guild and the Young People's Symphony will present 'Russian Fairytale' at the Berkeley Community Theater.

★ ★ The Gladys Hight School of Dancing in Chicago performed the Faust Ballet as done only in Europe, March 30th at the Goodman Theatre. Performance was in conjunction with the American Opera Company.

★ ★ Upon returning home after his first day in Sunday school Mark, 3½ year-old son of Tap teacher, Vernon Russell (Vallejo, Calif.) proclaimed proudly that he had learned a new song called 'God is Washing His Overshoes', Whereupon he was patiently informed that the title was 'God is Watching Over You'.

★ ★ The Baker Dance Studios of Southern California report a busy teaching season with their newest 'Calypso Couple' dance. Mr. Baker states the demand for this dance has been so great that he is making it available by mail.

• **DANCE TEACHERS — *PLEASE NOTE*** •
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Getting ready for 'Rhythm Revue of 1957' are students from the Yvonne School of Dance in Berkeley, Calif. Left to right, standing: Penny Furtney, Judy Nankervis, Kristin Taylor, Janis Hiroto, Barbara Annunzio and Kay Christopherson. Kneeling left to right: Frances Cassaro and Patty Henderson.

DANCING CAVALCADE

The Dancing Cavalcade preliminaries began April 4th at the Mississippi Room in San Diego, California.

Bearl Bennett was appointed to head Dancing Cavalcade's 1957 staff. Others on the staff include George Sanger, Oren De Forest, Frank Keddy, Larry Groset, Carolyn Lodbell and Gerald Williams.

The tournament, largest Ballroom contest event on the Pacific Coast, will feature, Waltz, Foxtrot, Rumba and Tango, a junior division, as well as a free-style event.

There will be approximately 32 preliminary events which are open to amateur dancers of San Diego, 18 years of age or older.

Tuulikki performs the Samoan sivasiva with her pupil, Jackie Aalto of Reedley, California during the ADTSC Xmas convention banquet —Kickbush photo.

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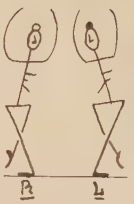

Excerpt from Edward Caton (Ballet Russe School (New York) Romantic Ballet for Group of Twelve, presented Jan. 27-29, Houston, Texas, for the S.T.A.D.T. chapter 3, D.M.A. Mr. Caton also presenteed a character dance and a full class in Jay Dance Notation.

For information concerning the book and home study course, write

LETICIA JAY
10 East 85th St., New York 28, N. Y.

The above photo of Thora and Ravelle shows the dance duo during their professional career. Today, Sam Ravelle is managing-director of the newly opened Fred Astaire Dance Studio in South Alameda County.

Mr. Ravelle had his professional training from some of the top dancers and choreographers, including the late Eduardo Cansino, famous Spanish dancer and father of Rita Hayworth. As a team Ravelle headlined in night clubs and hotels throughout America.

Adele Astaire

Sam served with the 8th Air Force, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross as well as the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters. However, his favorite subject of discussion, relative to his overseas combat duty, is his meeting with Adele Astaire, whom he met in London while she was hostess at a Red Cross Club. (See photo on this page). Sam says their entire discussion was about dancing—and her brother Fred.

NEW NOVEL ON BALLET LIFE

Daniel Arensky and Arthur Cummings have co-authored 'Charade for Happiness', a novel of ballet life.

Mr. Arensky is a former ballet dancer who has retired from the profession in order to write. Educated in Philadelphia, he began his ballet training there. Professionally, Mr. Arensky appeared on four continents with a number of outstanding ballet companies.

Arthur Cummings, a graduate of Yale University is a former editor of the Yale Literary Magazine.

'Charade for Happiness' ($3.) is published by Exposition Press, 386-4th Av New York, N.Y.

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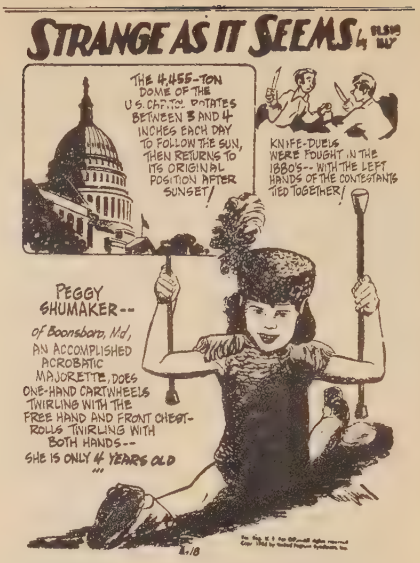
Members of the Suncoast Ballet who presented their premiere performance Feb. 23rd at the Sereno Hotel, St. Petersburg, Florida, have been requested to do a repeat performance by the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, Wed. March 27th at the Sarasota High School auditorium. Reading left to right: Kneeling—Diane Hood, Nancy Lehman, Evelyn Flathman, Jan Saylor, Jean Preece, Teddy Clautice, Sandra Bridenstine, Joanne Settle. Reading left to right: Standing—Arlene Jachens, Sandra Czubik, Celeste Joy, Grace Van Horne. The Suncoast Ballet boasts some forty members from various cities which include: Clearwater, Bradenton, Sarasota, St. Petersburg, Tampa, Avon Park and Lake Wales.

DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

YOU ARE WELCOME TO SEND NEWS OF YOUR ASSOCIATION TO THIS COLUMN

DANCING MASTERS OF WISCONSIN held their annual 'Spring Spree' March 17th at the Julia Kuhlig Studio in Milwaukee, Wisc. Faculty teachers included: Leon Palmissano, Modern Jazz; Virginia Lee Kehl, Modern; June Rold, Birthday Ballet; Vesper Chamberlin, Teenagers Ballroom.

ASSOCIATED DANCE TEACHERS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA held a One-Day Normal at the El Cortez Hotel in San Diego, Calif. Faculty members included: Rae Joy Sheldon, Spanish; Lu Breining, Free Style; Yvonne Boyton, Ballroom; Gladys Bowen, Ballroom; Bebe Carpenter, Tap and Babs Gordon, Ballet. The ADTSC honored Ivan Karloff with a Life Membership.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Peggy Shumaker, the young lady pictured above is one of some 100 majorettes from the R.A.Langlotz 'Golden Majorettes' in Hagerstown, Md. Peggy Attracted national attention when her picture appeared in papers across the nation.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR BALLROOM DANCING MEETS

The National Committee for Ballroom Dancing held a semi-annual General Meeting, Mar. 10th in New York. The main business included completion of the Council's proposed examinations in Ballroom dancing.

Last Fall the Council sent out invitations to teacher-organizations asking them to send delegates to a meeting for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of forming a committee for Ballroom dancing. The meeting proved successful and the present organization—National Committee for Ballroom Dancing was formed.

A subcommittee has formulated rules for dance contests which the organizais trying out at present at the Arcadia Ballroom in New York City. Jack Petrill is the manager and is also on the committee of the National Ballroom Operators.

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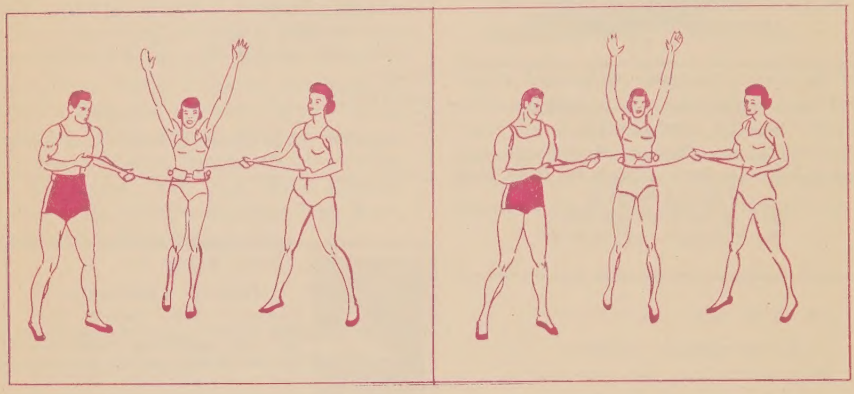

14. ROUNDOFF (LEFT)

Person on the right side of pupil holds rope from left side of belt in front of body. Person on the left side of pupil holds rope from the right side of belt in back of body. For a roundoff flip-flop, roundoff back, or a roundoff flip-flop back.

15. ROUNDOFF (RIGHT)

Person on the right side of pupil holds rope from left side of belt in back of body. Person on the left side of pupil holds rope from the right side of belt in front of body. For a roundoff flip-flop, roundoff back, or a roundoff flip-flop back.

(Drawings and Text, Copyright 1953 by James A. Rozanas, 10412 South St. Louis, Chicago 43, Ill.)

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